

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A, DECON UPON RECEIPT

TAGS: PFOR, LE, US

SUBJECT: CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE ON HOUGHTON/MACK
RETURN TO JOUNIEH

1. FOLLOWING IS PRESS GUIDANCE FOR DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S
USE, ON CONTINGENCY BASIS, AT SEPTEMBER 1 PRESS BRIEFING.
DEPARTMENT DOES NOT PLAN TO VOLUNTEER COMMENT ON SECOND
VISIT BY HOUGHTON/MACK TO CHRISTIAN-CONTROLLED LEBANON.
BEIRUT SHOULD DRAW UPON THIS GUIDANCE IN RESPONDING TO
LOCAL PRESS INQUIRIES.

2. QUOTE:

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NEA CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE, SEPTEMBER 1, 1976

SECOND VISIT OF U.S. OFFICIALS TO CHRISTIAN-CONTROLLED
LEBANON

Q. CAN YOU CONFIRM REPORTS THAT FSO'S HOUGHTON AND MACK
HAVE RETURNED FROM CYPRUS TO JOUNIEH?

A. THESE TWO OFFICERS RETURNED TO JOUNIEH ON SEPTEMBER 1.
AS YOU KNOW, THEY VISITED EAST BEIRUT FROM AUGUST 21 TO

AUGUST 24 ON A FACT-FINDING MISSION, THEN TRAVELLED TO
CYPRUS FROM WHERE THEY SUBMITTED REPORTS, AND NOW THEY ARE
BACK FOR ABOUT A WEEK FOR FURTHER TALKS. THEY WILL RE-
TURN TO WASHINGTON AFTER THIS VISIT.

Q. WHY DID THE DEPARTMENT NOT VOLUNTEER INFORMATION
ABOUT THEIR RETURN VISIT?

A. I WOULD DRAW YOUR ATTENTION TO THE DEPARTMENT'S AN-
NOUNCEMENT OF AUGUST 21 WHEN THESE OFFICERS FIRST ARRIVED
IN JOUNIEH. AT THAT TIME, WE EXPLAINED THAT THEY WERE
BEING SENT TO CHRISTIAN-CONTROLLED LEBANON FOR PURELY
PRACTICAL REASONS -- THAT IS, TO AUGMENT THE ACTIVITIES
OF OUR EMBASSY IN BEIRUT IN AN AREA WHICH PERSONNEL AS-
SIGNED TO THAT EMBASSY CANNOT NOW REACH IN SAFETY. WE
ALSO STATED THAT, SHOULD SECURITY CONDITIONS CONTINUE TO
SO DICTATE, WE MIGHT BE SENDING OFFICERS INTO JOUNIEH FROM
TIME TO TIME. NOW, JUST AS WE DO NOT, FOR PRACTICAL AND
SECURITY REASONS, PROVIDE ANNOUNCEMENTS OF THE SCHEDULES
AND TRAVEL PLANS OF EMBASSY OFFICERS IN BEIRUT, WE ARE NOT
GOING TO GET INTO THE BUSINESS OF TELEGRAPHING EVERY
MOVE OF HOUGHTON AND MACK. I CAN TELL YOU THAT THEIR
RETURN SHOULD BE VIEWED IN THE CONTEXT I'VE RECAPITULATED
HERE AND DOES NOT IMPLY ANY CHANGE IN OUR FREQUENTLY
STATED POLICY OF SUPPORT FOR LEBANON'S SOVEREIGNTY, TER-
RITORIAL INTEGRITY, NATIONAL COHESION AND UNITY.

Q. ARE HOUGHTON AND MACK NOW CARRYING ANY PROPOSALS TO
THE CHRISTIAN LEADERS FOLLOWING THEIR REPORT TO WASHINGTON
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FROM CYPRUS?

A. THEY ARE PREPARED TO CONTINUE THE DIALOGUE THEY BEGAN
EARLIER WITH THE CHRISTIAN LEADERS ON THE UNITED STATES
POSITION ABOUT LEBANESE ISSUES. THIS NEW VISIT WILL
ALSO GIVE THEM AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH A WIDER RANGE
OF PEOPLE THAN PREVIOUSLY IN CHRISTIAN-CONTROLLED LEBANON.
BUT I DO NOT THINK IT WILL BE HELPFUL TO OUR DIPLOMACY TO

GO INTO SPECIFICS ABOUT THE TALKS THEY WILL BE HAVING.
END QUOTE. ROBINSON

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